

## Chair report up to & including February 22/25

As we move through the ever changing governance in the US, I find it interesting that there now seems to be a large focus on the mental health well-being of elected officials. With the recent resignation of the PEI Premier, citing stress issues increasing within the job as one of the reasons, there are more webinars, meetings and groups, meeting to discuss these issues openly and in a safe place. The monthly meetings that a group started after the last UBCM, led by Brian Frenkel, continue to work towards alerting the Province, and Minister of Health Osbourne, that this is becoming a very prevalent issue within local government officials. Hopefully the resolution regarding this issue that we passed at the last Board meeting, to move onto the NCLGA convention in May, will pass easily and move the focus to UBCM in September. In this same vein, I attended a webinar on February 19<sup>th</sup> called Post Pandemic Stress, and although it did not specifically deal with elected officials, there certainly were some similarities in what many of our colleagues are experiencing. The Mental Health Symposium presented by NCLGA is currently slated to be held on October 19 from 9-4pm in Prince George.

Prior to the EA Forum in Vancouver, CAO Daly, Interim NDIT CEO Campbell and I, spent a few days in Victoria meeting with Ministers and Ministry staff. Unfortunately, CAO Daly and I missed the scheduled meeting with JEDI Minister Gibson due to flight delays, but Mr. Campbell

attended the meeting on behalf of NDIT. Both gentleman came to all meetings as there was nothing confidential being discussed, and often there was time for questions from either organization. We had a great breakfast meeting with Minister Osbourne, and I raised the issue of the 'up to 40%' issue on capital funding, which, thanks to CCRHD Chair Richmond, she was well aware of, however, it never hurts to add another voice! We met with Parliamentary Secretary Morrissette, mainly to discuss funding issues in Atlin that is an NDIT envelope, but we also talked about rural issues in general, and we all felt that Mr. Morrissette has a good understanding of local government issues as he spent time as Mayor of Firvale before entering Provincial politics. We also met with Citizen services staff prior to an in person meeting with Minister Chow, where I was able to bring up the concerns over the removal of copper landlines, once fiber optic has been installed, that has left many residents without a phone connection during a power outage, as they do not reside in a cell serviced area, and only have cell through Wi-Fi which needs power. We did get an unsatisfactory reply from TELUS, and we will continue to address this issue. Surprisingly enough, Minister Chow also has the same issue in the area he resides on Vancouver island. We had a zoom meeting with Minister Kahlon, where we discussed the unfairness of the grant for secondary suites only being available so long as the RD has across the region building inspection. We also had a discussion on the new Fire Services Act, that the Minister himself

started. MLA Doerkson hosted us for lunch in the Legislature dining room, where we talked about many of the issues currently facing the Cariboo Chilcotin area. I feel we are fortunate to have an opposition MLA that has such a good relationship with many of his cohorts across the aisle, as his name came up a few times in a positive manner during our meetings.

Once we were back in Vancouver, CAO Daly and I met with MOTT Minister Farnworth and his staff, about many of the road issues in the Cariboo, but especially the Hodgson slide and the longstanding need for SOLE's on the 2 residences on Maple Drive.

The EA forum was well attended and offered an array of issues common to RD's and Electoral Area Directors. This is such a great opportunity to network with our counterparts.

As many of you know, I am interviewing candidates for the CEO position at NDIT on February 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>, and hopefully the Board will reach a consensus at its Board day on February 26<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Margo A. Wagner